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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

AUGUST, 1915

“AMERICA FIRST!”

“SUIT THE ACTION TO THE WORD”

BY THE EDITOR

Our whole duty, for the present at any rate, is summed up in the motto: “America First!”—President Wilson to the Associated Press on April 20, 1915.

If I have in any degree forgotten what America was intended for, I will thank God if you will remind me.—President Wilson to first voters in Philadelphia on May 10, 1915.

WE trust that the day will never come when it may seem necessary to remind a President of the United States of what America stands for or of his own responsibility as the chosen conservator of the rights and liberties of her citizens. But there do come times when it is advisable to clear away the mists of logomachy and take a fresh perspective, to the end that there shall be no obscuration of the straight line of duty. To our mind this is one of those times because—and too great stress cannot be put upon the vital fact—our nation is now at the parting of the ways. One path points to honor and self-respect, the other to obloquy and shame; one to maintenance of free democracy, the other to craven submission to arrogant monarchy; one to *America First* in reality as well as in words, the other to *Americans Last* in the consideration of their own Government.

We are not of those who would evade responsibility or avert criticism by shouting vaguely, "Stand by the President"; that is a course befitting subjects, not citizens; but in fact, as our readers well know, we have upheld him consistently in this crucial instance, not because he was President, but because he was right. We hope to continue to support him for the same reason. What we wish to make certain is that he recognizes the need of a change, not of policy, but of method. Words having borne no fruit, recourse must be had to acts which shall speak so loud that their meaning cannot be wilfully misunderstood or safely ignored. As we write, response has not been made to the insulting German Note; we assume that it will be reiterative of demands and exemplary in form; our interest is not great; academic discussion palls in the face of vital things. It is not what the President is going to say, but what he is going to do, that concerns us as a nation desirous of peace but neither too weak nor "too proud" to fight if driven to the hateful necessity.

"My interest in the neutrality of the United States," said the President on April 20, "is not the petty desire to keep out of trouble. . . . I am interested in neutrality because there is something so much greater to do than fight; there is a distinction waiting for this nation that no nation has ever yet got. That is the distinction of absolute control and self-mastery. Whom do you admire most among your friends? The irritable man? The man who will fight at the drop of the hat, whether he knows what the hat is dropped for or not? Don't you admire and don't you fear, if you have to contest with him, the self-mastered man who watches you with calm eye and comes on only when you have carried the thing so far that you must be disposed of? That is the man you respect. That is the man who, you know, has at bottom a much more fundamental and terrible courage than the irritable, fighting man. Now, I covet for America this splendid courage of reserve moral force."

"It sounds well," once remarked Grover Cleveland, reflectively, of an address by a college professor; "what do you suppose he means?" So, too, this, in common with the official declarations which we have commended so highly, has a fine ring, but what we want to know is how much further the disdainful Kaiser must carry this particular thing before the self-mastered man with the calm eye will "come on."

Lest we forget:

On February 4 Germany, in brazen violation of international law and usage, declared the waters surrounding the British Isles a "war zone" and threatened to destroy every enemy merchant ship "without its being always possible to avert the dangers threatening the crews and passengers on that account."

On February 19 the United States protested against the abridgment of the "*acknowledged rights*" of American citizens on the high seas and declared that she would not only hold the German Government to a "*strict accountability*" for any such infringement but would "*take any steps that might be necessary*" to safeguard American lives.

Germany wasted no words in reply; she answered with an act unparalleled for barbarity in modern history. On May 7—nearly three months ago—she sank the *Lusitania* and murdered more than a thousand unoffending men, women and children, including more than one hundred Americans, without giving them so much as a chance to save their lives.

On May 13 the United States expressed a "confident expectation" that Germany would "disavow" an act "so obviously subversive of the principles of warfare" and firmly declared her intention "not to omit *any word or act* necessary to the performance of its sacred duty of maintaining the rights" of her citizens.

So far from "disavowing" the dastardly performance of her naval officers, Germany gloried in their achievement. A holiday for general rejoicing was decreed by municipalities, and press dispatches from Denmark recorded that "*the Kaiser bestowed upon Lieutenant Hersing, commander of the U-21, the decoration of the order Pour le Merite, in recognition of the torpedoing of the Lusitania.*"

Again Germany's actions spoke louder than words, but there were words, too, many of them, shuffling, irrelevant and false. With crocodile tears, simultaneously with her official festivities, Germany expressed "deep regret to neutrals concerned that nationals of those countries lost their lives," through the skill of Lieutenant Hersing, decorated by the Kaiser. "According to reports here [in Berlin]," the answer of May 28 continued, "the *Lusitania* when she left New York had guns aboard which were mounted under deck and masked", and "lastly"—this without qualification—"the *Imperial Government* must especially point out

that on her last trip the *Lusitania* had Canadian troops aboard." Both of these statements were false.

Again—on June 10—the President patiently submitted proofs to the German Government that it had been "misinformed," reiterated his understanding that Germany accepts "as established beyond question the principle that the lives of non-combatants cannot lawfully nor rightfully be put in jeopardy by the destruction of a non-resisting merchantman", and sought "assurances" that this principle be put into practice.

On July 9—four weeks later and two months after having assassinated one hundred American men, women and children—Germany responded to the President's frank and considerate representations with a contemptuous sneer.

The Imperial Government learned with satisfaction from the note how earnestly the Government of the United States is concerned in seeing the principles of humanity realized in the present war. Also this appeal finds ready echo in Germany, and the Imperial Government is quite willing to permit its statements and decisions in the present case to be governed by the principles of humanity just as it has done always.

Whether this opening sentence was designed to be ironical is a matter of opinion; we neither know nor care; let it pass. Nor does the grandiloquent condescension of the *Imperial Government*, in permitting its "statements and decisions" to be "governed" by the principles of humanity, merit even passing attention. We asked respectfully that their deeds, not their words, be made to conform to humane principles; and to this request they make no response.

The Imperial Government welcomed with gratitude when the American Government, in the note of May 15, itself recalled that Germany had always permitted itself to be governed by the principles of progress and humanity in dealing with the law of maritime war.

The *Imperial Government*, in turn, is welcome to whatever gratification it can derive from contrasting its honorable past with its shameful present.

Since the time when Frederick the Great negotiated with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce of September 9, 1785, between Prussia and the Republic of the West, German and American statesmen have, in fact, always stood together in the struggle for the freedom of the seas and for the protection of peaceable trade.

Are they standing together now? Read this from the ancient treaty between Prussia and the United States which is still in force:

If one of the contracting parties should be engaged in war with another Power, the free intercourse and commerce of the subjects or citizens of the party remaining neutral with the belligerent Power shall not be interrupted.

It is this explicitly guaranteed right to engage in free intercourse and commerce with other nations that we contend for and *all* that we have contended for; it is, moreover, this self-same privilege which Germany denies to us and whose abridgment she demands. What impudence to talk of “freedom of the seas” and “protection of peaceable trade” while simultaneously designating illegal “war zones” and torpedoing merchant ships indiscriminately!

Germany likewise has been always tenacious of the principle that war should be conducted against the armed and organized forces of an enemy country, but that the enemy civilian population must be spared as far as possible from the measures of war.

Conceding that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a wanton massacre and not a “measure of war,” the most striking example of Germany’s tenacity in sparing civilians is afforded by Belgium.

The case of the *Lusitania* shows with horrible clearness to what jeopardizing of human lives the manner of conducting war employed by our adversaries leads.

One might infer that England sank her own ship. Or perhaps it was France or San Marino. But no!

If the commander of the *German submarine* which destroyed the *Lusitania* had caused the crew and passengers to take to the boats before firing a torpedo this would have meant the sure destruction of his own vessel.

One way to have obviated the “sure (?) destruction of his own vessel” was to refrain from slaughtering innocents, even at the risk of not winning the decoration of the order *Pour le Merite* for glorious assassination. In any case—

After the experiences in sinking much smaller and less seaworthy vessels it was to be expected that a mighty ship like the *Lusitania* would remain above water long enough, even after the torpedoing, to permit passengers to enter the ship’s boats.

So really no harm to anybody was intended; the outcome was unfortunate, to be sure, but how else could the gallant

Lieutenant Hersing have got his medal and the school-children of Germany have obtained their holiday! Besides——

In addition it may be pointed out that if the *Lusitania* had been spared thousands of cases of munitions would have been sent to Germany's enemies and thereby thousands of German mothers and children robbed of bread winners.

How much wiser to rob American mothers and children at home of bread-winners and to kill the American mothers and children aboard the *Lusitania*, thereby conserving the interests of superwomen as well as of supermen!

The American Government will also understand and appreciate that in the fight for existence, which has been forced upon Germany by its adversaries and announced by them, it is the sacred duty of the Imperial Government to do all within its power to protect and save the lives of German subjects. If the Imperial Government were derelict in these duties it would be guilty before God and history of the violation of those principles of highest humanity which are the foundation of every national existence.

It may, indeed, prove to be a fight for existence; but “*forced upon Germany*”? Then it was England, not Germany, that was fully armed and equipped and ready to spring at a moment's notice! And it was France, not Germany, that tore up the “scrap of paper” and made the irresistible drive through brave little Belgium, devastating her fields, burning her villages, shooting her old men, violating her women; France, rushing on and on in a mad fury to the very gates of Berlin until—why, until the unoffending Germans drawn hurriedly from all parts of the Empire to defend the firesides of the Fatherland managed to gather in sufficient numbers to crowd back the overreaching invaders; of course; and, of course, too, we understand—“understand and appreciate”—that in such circumstances it is indeed “the sacred duty of the *Imperial Government* to do all within its power to protect and save the lives of German subjects,” even though despised Americans and other helpless neutrals do perish in the process. Of what consequence are their paltry lives—the lives of men like Frohman and Pearson and Hubbard and of mere American women and children when contrasted with a possibility of the *Imperial Government* finding themselves “guilty before God and history”—history especially—“of violating principles of

highest humanity"? But there is no need to indulge in a contemplation so horrifying. The Almighty, in common with ourselves, we assume, is duly informed that——

If in the present war the principles which should be the ideal of the future have been traversed more and more, the longer its duration, the German Government has no guilt therein.

From which two inferences are obvious: (1) That humane principles *have been* traversed in the past and (2) that they *will be* traversed "more and more" as the war continues. So the *Imperial Government* absolve themselves in advance. *Me* (positively) *und Gott* (reservedly) can do no wrong. And the United States of America and her President, her Congress, and her people can go to hell.

For that is what Germany says to us; just that; nothing more and nothing less. She disavows none of her crimes; she makes no suggestion of reparation; she recognizes no rights of neutrals; she reiterates her repudiation of all treaties and of all laws, whether among nations or of civilization and humanity, which may conflict with her own conception of military necessity; she apologizes for nothing; she concedes nothing; she acknowledges nothing; she seeks only to secure our approval of her lawless practices through our acquiescence in her proposal that we waive our unquestioned rights upon the high seas and sail so many of our ships as she may permit, under her surveillance and subject to her dictation; having injured us, she would wrong us; having insulted us, she would humiliate us; that is all there is of this insolent declaration.

Not one of our moderate demands is accorded even the courtesy of frank recognition; all are in effect denied; each and every one is either tacitly spurned or impudently ignored.

Never before has this country and seldom, if ever, has any country been treated so contemptuously. Why is this? What has happened to convince even a truculent autocracy that this Republic can be flouted with impunity? Surely history warrants no such assumption. Tripoli at the outset was taught her lesson by Jefferson, England first by Madison and again by Cleveland, Mexico by Polk, France by Lincoln, Spain by McKinley, and Japan, more decisively than is commonly understood, by Roosevelt. What now induces Germany to believe that President Wilson does not mean what he says? That "strict accountability" signifies nothing?

That definite and solemn pledges to "take any steps that may be necessary" to enforce American rights are but empty phrases?

Is "watchful waiting" largely responsible for a misapprehension that may prove to be fateful? It is a natural inference. The facts cannot have escaped the attention of Germany that in Mexico we have permitted our treaties to be ignored, our flag to be spat upon, hundreds of American citizens to be murdered, and hundreds of millions of Americans' property to be destroyed; that we have bullied and cajoled to so little effect as to evoke only derision from common bandits; that after sacrificing the lives of a score of our own sailors and killing hundreds of Mexicans in the name of "humanity," we backed away from the anarchy which we had substituted for a Government and calmly announced that after all it was "none of our business" and that there should be no further interference during the period of the present Administration. That the *Imperial Government* should reason that the Kaiser is surely as awe-inspiring as Carranza or Zapata and that flat refusal to protect American lives and property on land warranted full expectation of like conduct respecting outrages upon the seas is readily understood.

But obviously there is another and more insidious cause back of the *Imperial Government's* insolence,— nothing less than a fixed belief that the sentiment of this country is not only divided but is veering in their direction. "Feeling in the United States," placidly remarks the inspired *Morgen Post* of Berlin, "is changed from what it was at the time of the *Lusitania* sinking and President Wilson will have to satisfy this new feeling in considering and answering the present note. That the note will meet unrestrained approval at the hands of a large part of Americans is certain." For this impression undoubtedly, as we foresaw, the resignation of Bryan, supplemented by the traitorous utterances of hyphenated editors who write as Germans, not as Americans, is directly responsible. And it is because of this conviction beyond question that the *Imperial Government's* address was in no sense, categorical or otherwise, a response to the American Government; it was a stump speech to the American people; not an answer to the President, but an appreciation of Bryan.

Germany's misconception of our real attitude may be at-

tributable to her stupidity or to her wilfulness; it matters little. The important fact is that President Wilson's mind harbours no illusions. Speaking in New York on April 20, he said:

Men are saying that if we go to war upon either side there would be a divided America—an abominable libel of ignorance! America is not all of it vocal just now. It is vocal in spots, but I, for one, have a complete and abiding faith in that great silent body of Americans who are not standing up and shouting and expressing their opinions just now, but are waiting to find out and support the duty of America. I am just as sure of their solidity and of their loyalty and of their unanimity, if we act justly, as I am that the history of this country has at every crisis and turning point illustrated this great lesson.

It was well that the President should voice his faith in his countrymen in return for the splendid confidence which they had manifested in him. And, happily, there has been no change on either side. But three long months have passed since the most damnable outrage we have ever known was inflicted upon American citizens, and we are still waiting, not now to "find out," but to "*support*," the duty of America. Following the lead of our President, we have acted more than justly; while he was showing, as he should have shown, the utmost consideration, we have proved our patience, our long suffering, our sincere devotion to peace. But we can go no further along a road which leads nowhere; nor can our guide, if he would keep the faith; a new way, an effective way, must be found to uphold the dignity and maintain the honor of the Republic. Reasoning has proved futile, pleading has been spurned; no course is left but to *suit the action to the word*. There is no question of an "ultimatum"; every American Note has contained the ultimatum that our rights and the rights of all neutrals are inviolable and must be recognized in theory and in practice. We confidently anticipate a yet more emphatic and a *final* expression in the reply which, as we write, is in the making.

And then—if, as we foresee, no adequate response shall be forthcoming *immediately*—but one thing will remain to be done. We can no longer humiliate our envoys by compelling them to represent in other capitals a Power which defies and derides their own country. We can no longer retain in Berlin an Ambassador personating a National sovereignty which is contemned by the *Imperial Government*

to which he is accredited. We can no longer extend our hospitality to the obnoxious Minister of a disdainful Prince. We can no longer recognize in any way a Power which by its own deliberate, flagrant and sinful practices has constituted itself an outlaw among nations.

Would action to this end mean war? That would be for Germany, not for us, to determine. Nor would we turn a feather to influence her decision. If so be it that the great issue between Autocracy and Democracy is in the crucible, while only that long, thin line of the gallant sons of France stands between civilization and the domination of the Huns, it ill becomes the citizens of this Republic to evade any responsibility or to "omit any word or *any act*" veering so much as a hair's breadth from "*support of the duty of America.*" Germany is "fighting for existence" of her own volition. So, involuntarily, are the peoples of England and of France. So may we be compelled to do to withstand the *Imperial Government's* ruthless endeavor to place "*Deutschland über*"—not merely France and England, but—"über Alles." Let their words be ours. No more than they and *never* so long as patriotic spirit animates American beings shall this free Republic be found "guilty before God and history of violation of those principles of highest humanity which are the foundations of every national existence" and of all civilization.

We can but believe that, when those American men and women were swept to their doom from the decks of the *Lusitania*, after vainly trying to save "the kiddies," their hearts were comforted by the certainty in their minds that they had a country. Shall we who live sear the trusting souls of those who died by forgetting that they were our kinsmen and were slaughtered like sheep in a pen?

A YEAR OF WAR

THE first year of the War of the Nations has been a year of dispelled delusions. Never before, probably, have so many beliefs been shattered, so many expectations been disappointed, so many unexpected things come to pass. Almost every preconceived notion of importance concerning the military situation in Europe has been proved an error. Almost everything which was confidently declared impossible has been performed.

It used to be said that despite, or perhaps rather because, of the bloated armaments there would never be a war between any of the great military Powers. The forces of destruction which they had manufactured and marshalled were so tremendous and appalling that no government would dare to release them and set them in action. As a matter of fact those forces, on land, on sea, under the sea, and in the air, were and are far more powerful for destruction than they were supposed to be. Yet they have been unchained in all their potency without the slightest hesitation.

It was also said that war was impossible because the money-kings of the world would not permit it. The great capitalists who held the purse-strings of the empires would not provide the means of waging a war which would destroy the value of vast investments if it did not actually bankrupt the belligerents. Their profit was in the transactions of peace, and they would not themselves assist in the destruction of those profits. Yet the capitalists of the world flocked forward with avidity to provide the financial means of beginning and maintaining the most costly war, in gold as well as in blood, that the world has ever seen, and they are now, after a year, straining every nerve to supply the means of keeping it going.

There was a familiar and confident belief that whatever nations might fight each other, Great Britain and Germany certainly would not. France and Germany might fight over the "lost provinces"; Italy might wrest "*Italia Irredenta*" from the hated Austrian; Russia might try forcibly to absorb the Slav states of Austria. But Great Britain and Germany, which never in history had been at war with each other, would assuredly not fight. Each was the other's best customer in trade, and each had too vast a sea-borne commerce to be risked and sacrificed in war. They might grumble and growl at each other, and compete in naval expansion; but two nations of shopkeepers would never be so foolish as to ruin their trade by actually fighting. Yet for a year these two have been the recognized leaders in the war on their respective sides, and it is seen that the war is primarily and fundamentally between them, with the others as mere followers and aids.

Again, there was a feeling that since the Congresses at The Hague the world had entered a new era in which "the common sense of most," if it did not actually "hold the

fretful realm in awe," would greatly restrain belligerence and would in any event make the nations more than ever amenable to international law and observant of treaty obligations. Yet this war was begun with one of the most flagrant and cynical violations of a "scrap of paper" that the world has ever seen, and it has been throughout the year conducted on land and sea with an unsurpassed disregard not merely of the agreements of The Hague but also of some of the longest-established and most generally recognized principles of international law. Not in a hundred years has there been another so lawless conflict between civilized Powers.

So much for the irenic illusions which have been rudely dispelled. There were others, relating to the conduct of the war in case it should occur.

It would, men said, of necessity be a very short war. Its great cost would limit its duration. The tremendous destructiveness of its human and mechanical agencies would make it impossible for it to be long maintained. One or two gigantic battles would end it. There would be no protracted sieges; there could be no long campaigns. Flesh and blood, and gold, could not endure the strain. Well, the war is costing more, in money and in lives, than was expected; there have been long sieges; there have been not one or two but many stupendous battles; and at the end of a year it seems to have little more than begun, and judicious authorities are talking of two or three more years of it.

There was a general agreement, too, that war if it occurred would be civilized and humane in its conduct. Savagery, massacre, rapine, wanton vandalism, were things of the past. International agreements had put an end to them. The use of poisons and other barbarous agencies would of course be unknown; prisoners would be humanely treated; and the lives, rights and property of non-combatants would be sacredly respected. Yet methods of warfare worthy only of Malayan savages or Barbary pirates have been widely practiced; the ill-treatment and even the murder of prisoners have been not uncommon; while rape and loot and devastation, directed against the civil populace, have raged to an extent hitherto unknown since the days of Pappenheim's Black Riders and the sack of Magdeburg.

There is or should be another awakening from illusion, of special and intense interest to America. It is, or should

be, seen with convincing clearness that the United States enjoys no intrinsic immunity from implication in European wars. The present war began almost exactly a hundred years after the close of the last preceding general European war. Theoretically we had nothing to do with that former war. Practically it so affected our vital interests that we were involved in a separate war with one of the chief belligerents. If Great Britain and France had not been engaged in a life or death conflict, we should have had no war with Great Britain in 1812. The present war has, after the lapse of a hundred years, affected our vital interests and national honor in a similar manner, to an extent which has actually strained our relations with at least one of the belligerents and has forced us to regard our involvement in hostilities as painfully within the pale of possibilities. The over-confident boast that we were exempt from Europe's broils rings vain and hollow. A century ago we had no such exemption, and we have none to-day. As a world-Power we cannot regard with indifference a war among other world-Powers; nor can we rationally imagine that our position is so isolated as to assure us freedom from being attacked or from being compelled ourselves to take up arms in vindication of our rights.

These are the lessons, or some of them, of the first year of the war. They may seem discouraging to some who have cherished visions of peace, and alarming to those who have imagined America to occupy a place apart from and superior to the rest of the world. They should be neither. Great as is the inevitable disappointment of the world at the flouting of treaties and the breach at once of the law and the peace, it should not for a moment deter men and nations from the effort to establish peace in the world upon the only possible basis of justice, and through the only effective means, namely, the education of the people in ways not merely of peace but still more of international justice and righteousness. Great as is the revelation of menace to America, it should cause no panic nor alarm, but rather a calm and thoughtful resolution to set our house in order in readiness for a contingency which we must deprecate and which we must hope will never occur, but from which we must realize that we enjoy no exemption.

WILL THE WAR BANKRUPT EUROPE?

THE most instructive and significant comparison of the cost of this war is not with that of any former war so much as with the wealth of the nations and with, therefore, their ability to endure the fiscal strain. In our own great war of half a century ago, to which we naturally turn for an example, the North, with a population of 21,000,000 and a total estimated wealth of more than \$10,000,000,000, spent \$1,000,000,000 a year for four years. That was ten per cent a year, or a total for the war of forty per cent, of our total wealth. It was also about \$50 per capita annually. How does that compare with what Europe is doing at the present time? Or, rather, what should Europe be able to do on such a basis?

Let us take the case of Great Britain, since its fiscal operations and conditions are better known than those of any other of the belligerent powers. Mr. Asquith, in speaking about the recent loan of several billion dollars,—which was promptly over-subscribed,—said that the cost of the first year of the war to that country would amount to \$5,000,000,000. Now the United Kingdom has a population of about 45,000,000. At five billions a year, therefore, the war is costing it \$111 per capita, or more than twice as much as the Civil War cost the United States. On the other hand, the wealth of the United Kingdom is estimated at \$80,000,000,000; so that the war is costing annually only 6.25 per cent of that, instead of the ten per cent which our war cost us. Great Britain could therefore keep on at the present rate of war expenditures for nearly six and a half years before she had consumed as large a part of her total wealth as we did in four years, namely, forty per cent. That is, obviously, because Great Britain is much richer, per capita, than the United States was half a century ago. From such a point of view, then, the fiscal outlook of the war for Great Britain is by no means disheartening. The war can scarcely last six years, but if it does, the United Kingdom will be subjected to no greater pecuniary strain than the United States was in the Civil War.

For the other belligerents the outlook is less favorable, because their wealth is less, per capita, than that of Great Britain. France is by far the most favorably situated of them all, her wealth being only a little less than that of the

United Kingdom; but the others show a painful contrast with these in their per capita wealth. Great Britain, the richest country in the world, is estimated to have a per capita wealth of \$1,777. France stands second, with \$1,625. The United States is third, with about \$1,300. Fourth,—among the great powers,—at a long distance, comes Germany, with only \$923; and then Italy with \$588, Austria-Hungary with \$500, and Russia with only \$250.

It is an obvious and inevitable reflection that, if money is indeed the sinews of war, the Allies have an enormous advantage over Germany and Austria-Hungary. The per capita wealth of either Great Britain or France is considerably greater than that of Germany and Austria-Hungary combined. The total wealth of France, despite her far smaller population, is greater than that of Germany, while that of the United Kingdom approximates that of Germany and Austria-Hungary put together. The combined wealth of Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy is nearly two and a half times as great as that of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The effect of the war upon foreign commerce is also to be considered, though it may not be easy to determine which side has the advantage. On the face of the case the Allies would seem to be the more favorably situated. Their control of the sea enables them to maintain their foreign trade with little interruption, and at the same time practically to annihilate that of their opponents. Beyond doubt, that results in great convenience to the one side and great inconvenience, perhaps in some respects distress, to the other. Convenience is not always, however, a criterion of profit. The export trade of the Allies has been much impaired. British exports this year, we are told, have decreased by at least thirty-three per cent. That means that the balance of trade is heavily against that country, and, therefore, that there is a large outflow of gold to foreign creditors. Germany may suffer inconvenience and privation through being unable to import goods, but at least she is not being drained of gold to cover an unfavorable balance of trade. If she cannot import goods she does not have to export gold.

The case of the colonies is somewhat different. Germany has lost all of her extensive possessions, or at least has lost all communication with them. Theoretically, sentimentally, and with respect to the far future potentially, that may be

accounted a heavy loss. Practically, for present purposes, it is an actual gain, for the reason that the colonies were not a source of revenue to her, but of heavy expense, and of that expense she is, through the loss of them, now relieved. The seizure of some of her colonies and the severance of intercourse with the others are consequently a pecuniary advantage to her. On the other hand, it is also an advantage to the Allies, at least to Great Britain and France, to retain possession of their colonies, since these have been and are sources of large profit to them.

In two major respects these conditions and processes are of direct pecuniary interest to the United States. Obviously, a great opportunity for commercial profit is afforded us. We hear of European orders for war supplies and other commodities placed in this country, to the amount of scores and even hundreds of millions of dollars, which must have a stimulating effect upon our industries. In the first five months of the present year British imports increased by \$160,000,000 and British exports decreased by \$360,000,000. As we have long been her chief source of imports and have stood second as a purchaser of her exports,—Germany being first,—the meaning of this is not difficult to divine. She is buying more than ever from us, and is selling us a little less than before the war, to the great advantage of our balance of trade with her. It will also be noticed that there has been a very marked increase in the volume of shipping on the high seas under the American flag, which we may hope will prove permanent.

The other feature of interest is more purely financial than commercial, and it is this: that because of the war European countries are reselling to us the American securities which they have been holding. It is estimated in round numbers that before the war something like four billion dollars' worth of American securities, including railroads and industrials, were held in Europe, chiefly in Great Britain and France. These have been coming back to us for redemption at the rate of more than a million dollars a day. Down to the middle of the present year the total amount thus thrown back upon the American markets was about \$400,000,000, or ten per cent of the whole. It is an interesting and gratifying circumstance that we have been able to receive and to liquidate this large amount without embarrassment, and indeed without any considerable effect upon our own money

market. It is no small achievement thus to pay off ten per cent of our foreign obligations in less than a year, and the circumstance suggests the cheerful prospect that if the war continues and this liquidation continues we shall become far less of a debtor nation than we have been, if, indeed, we do not become a creditor nation. With the redemption of foreign-held securities at the rate of ten per cent a year, and the increase of foreign loans placed and held in this country, the balance of credit may in time be in favor of the United States.

There arises finally the question of the ultimate solvency of the European Powers, and especially of those which are beaten in this war. Will they be able to meet their obligations, or will they be compelled to repudiate their debts? At the outbreak of the war the belligerents were already burdened with debts which seemed enormous by the side of ours. That of France was \$6,280,000,000; of Germany, Empire and States, \$5,000,000,000; of Russia, \$4,553,000,000; of Austria-Hungary, Empire and States, \$3,700,000,000; of Great Britain, \$3,486,000,000; and of Italy, \$2,706,000,000. But already those debts have been enormously increased; though not, of course, by the entire expenses of the war, since these latter have been met in part by increased revenue from special war taxation. Anticipating the ending of the war at the earliest possible date, however, we must expect these debts to be doubled, while the trebling and even the quadrupling of some of them, especially of that of Great Britain, cannot be regarded as beyond the limit of possibility.

What, then, could the United Kingdom do with a debt of, say, ten billions; and what could the other countries named do with a comparable load? Again we must naturally turn to our own record for an example. Our national debt at the end of the Civil War amounted to \$2,682,500,000. As the nation was then reunited, this must be reckoned as resting upon the population and wealth of all, and not merely of the North, as in our former computation. The population was then approximately 33,000,000, and the wealth probably \$16,000,000,000. It must also be observed that we are now considering the debt, and not the cost of the war, a large part of which had been met out of the current revenue of the government. The debt in 1865, then, amounted to \$81 per capita of the population, and to something less than 17

per cent of the wealth of the nation, which latter was then only \$485 per capita. On the same basis, what debt could Great Britain endure? At our rate of \$81 per capita her 45,000,000 people could carry only \$3,645,000,000, or less than they already have incurred. But we must remember that their per capita wealth is \$1,777, instead of only \$485, and its national total is \$80,000,000,000. A debt of 16.7 per cent of that, corresponding with ours in 1865, would amount to no less than \$13,360,000,000. If, then, the British debt should be increased as a result of this war to more than thirteen billions, or nearly four times what it was when the war began, it would still be, in proportion to the wealth of the nation, no larger than ours was at the end of our war, when we rightly reckoned it little short of moral treason for any one so much as to hint at insolvency or repudiation.

There is, of course, another important consideration, which makes in the other direction. That is the difference in recuperative powers between America and European countries, though this is not all on one side. The comparative ease with which we bore and reduced our debt was due to the rapid growth of the United States in population and wealth. No such phenomenon is to be expected, or indeed is possible, in any of these European countries. On the other hand, some of them practice a degree of thrift of which we Americans have no conception, and others have developed an industrial and commercial potency far exceeding ours and of immense profit. It would, therefore, be injudicious to gauge their debt-bearing powers entirely by our own. We should doubt if the United States could or, at any rate, would have paid the forced tribute of two billions as expeditiously and as cheerfully as France did at the close of the Terrible Year, and we may expect to see the nations bear their increased burden of debt with a fortitude and an efficiency from which something might be learned by ourselves. At any rate, it would be rash and probably unjust to assume that as a result of this war, stupendously extravagant as are its expenses, the nations of Europe will be bankrupted and will repudiate their debts. Our own indignant resentment of such hints concerning ourselves may well restrain us from such imputations upon our neighbors. All Europe may become the "weary Titan" of Arnold's vision, but it was forty-odd years ago that he had that vision of England, "staggering on to her goal." During all those

years the load "well nigh not to be borne" has increased, and yet has been borne. So, we may believe, she and her neighbors will bear their burdens; staggering, perhaps, at times, but never falling. The sinews of war will be sorely strained, but they will not break.

NUMBERS IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

It was observed in these pages eleven months ago, and repeated last month, that "Our own Revolutionists, the Boers, and the Belgians have left no room for doubt that one patriot defending his country is the equal of three members of an attacking force;" whereupon says the *Hartford Times*:

Colonel Harvey should consult the figures concerning the total number of British troops and American patriots engaged in the wars of the Revolution of 1812.

But why? "Gentle shepherd, tell us why?" Is it for confirmation of our statement? Or should we have figured more exactly and have said, not that one defender is equal to three aggressors, but that one is equal to 2.999, or to 3.001? Or again, and preferably, is it to suggest an opportunity for correcting once more that most persistent error concerning the "total number of American troops" engaged in the Revolution? The common statement is that the Colonies furnished to the Continental army 231,771 men, beside nearly half as many more militia, and it seems to be supposed that Washington had something like that number of men in his army; "which," as Euclid says, "is absurd."

There are two points of view from which to regard the subject. One is that of the total population of the belligerent States. At the time of our Revolution no census had been taken of either England or America. But seeing that in 1790 the population of this country was ascertained to be only 3,172,006, Patrick Henry's round-number estimate of three millions in 1776 may well be considered above rather than below the mark. The first British census in 1801 showed a population in the whole United Kingdom of 15,896,452; from which we may safely conclude that in 1776-1783 it numbered as much as 10,000,000. Ten millions to three is something more than three to one.

The other point of view is that of the number of soldiers enrolled and engaged on each side. It is recorded, as we

have said, that 231,771 men were enrolled in the Continental army. That sum is obtained by the facile but quite futile process of adding together the yearly figures, from 1775 to 1783; taking no cognizance of the fact that thus men serving for three years are counted three times over, and that men re-enlisting are duplicated. The fact is that not one-fourth of that number were ever enrolled at the same time, and that the Continental army never had an effective strength of more than one-tenth of it. The greatest number ever enrolled at one time was less than 47,000, in 1776; and that represented enrollment, not efficiency.

At Bunker Hill the Americans were 1,200, against 3,400 British. At Cambridge in January, 1776, Washington raised the flag of Commander-in-Chief over fewer than 10,000 men. When the Declaration of Independence was adopted he had fewer than 8,000, while the British here numbered 30,000. In August, 1776, at New York, Washington had 10,514 men, mostly militia, and no fleet, while Howe had 31,625, of whom 24,464 were the equal of the finest veterans of Europe, beside a powerful fleet, giving him full control of the water. On Long Island, Washington had fewer than 8,000, chiefly raw militia, while Howe had more than 20,000 regulars. In 1777 Washington never had more than 11,000 men. In the spring of 1779 he had about 8,600 effectives, while the British at New York and Newport numbered about 16,000, not to mention other thousands in the South.

In the closing scenes, Cornwallis at Petersburg had 5,000 veteran regulars, and yet was baffled by Lafayette with only 1,000 Continentals and perhaps 2,000 raw recruits; and he was shut up at Yorktown with 7,000 regulars by Lafayette with 2,000 Continentals and 3,000 untrained militia.

So much, then, for the numbers in our Revolution; abundantly confirming our former statement. Let that statement, however, not be misunderstood, or misconstrued into an argument against adequate preparation for national defense. It must be borne in mind that conditions of warfare have greatly changed. Morgan's riflemen, and even Livingston's militia, had as effective weapons and ammunition as the veterans of Burgoyne and Cornwallis. Even artillery could be made by the Americans about as well as by the British. But to-day what would an improvised militia army amount to when confronted with the tremendous enginery of Essen, Le Creusot or Woolwich? Granted that we could

make as good cannon and shells; that would avail us little if an abundant supply of them were not made and ready for use when war broke, for such things cannot be turned out over night, like the moulded lead bullets of the Revolution. The discrepancy between the trained and thoroughly equipped regular army and the improvised volunteer force is almost immeasurably greater than it was in the Revolution, or even in the Civil War. In our article in which we spoke of the efficiency of one defending patriot against three invaders we were particularly discussing the defensive potency of the best trained and best equipped army in the world.

There is one other point. Could we at this time hope to oppose one against three of an attacking force? A great European military empire, getting control of the sea with a superior fleet, could easily throw an expeditionary force of 250,000 men upon our shores. It would not undertake the invasion of America with fewer. But where have we one-third of that number of effective men to oppose to it? Our regular army could scarcely provide an effective field force of more than one-sixth, or at best one-fifth, of that number. The tremendous defensive power of Germany, where every man is a trained soldier, is no criterion by which to judge the power of the United States, where only about two men in a thousand of the population have even rudimentary military training.

We confidently reaffirm our statement that one patriot in defense is equal to three invaders in attack; equipment and efficiency being approximately equal. But we are no less insistent in the demand that this nation shall be made and kept ready at any time to oppose every three possible invaders with one defender as well equipped and as efficient as they.

THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS

NATURE maintains an equilibrium. She will not permit the world to become either over-populated or depopulated, until the time comes for writing "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin!" upon the wall. There has prevailed a notion that the former of those conditions is prevented by the occurrence of great wars and pestilences. Doubtless these things do have their effect. But they are not a part of Nature's plan.

They are sporadic and abnormal, and, save in a very few cases, quite insufficient for the needed end. Not since the Black Death of the Middle Ages has there been in Europe a pestilence sufficient to affect materially the growth of population. Moreover, there is no reverse of these things to serve as a stimulus to failing population. The methods of Nature are more subtle than these, but they are more constant in operation, and are more effective. Some recondite but infallible law, the nature of which is not yet understood but the results of which are clearly seen, appears to provide automatically for a certain balance between births and deaths, and between the increase of population and the duration of life; a law perhaps as certain as that of gravitation or of the conservation of energy. Why not? If the propagation of the race is a part of Nature's scheme, why should it not be controlled and directed by Nature's laws?

When the birthrate of a country rises, its deathrate also rises; and when the birthrate falls, the deathrate also falls.

Superficially observed, this process, or at any rate the latter part of it, is attributed to "conditions." Neglect of sanitation, it is explained, causes a high deathrate, as in Russia. On the other hand, improved sanitation causes a lower deathrate, as in Great Britain. These are obvious truisms; but they are no explanation of the balance between birthrates and deathrates, since they do not apply at all to the former, and only in part do they apply to the latter. For the deathrate is falling in some countries in which sanitary conditions are not improving, or are improving too slightly to be taken into account; and it is practically stationary in some countries in which the very greatest improvements are being made in sanitary conditions. In other words, there is no invariable correspondence between deathrates and sanitation.

As for the birthrate, it is difficult to see how sanitation could directly affect it in either direction, though, of course, its influence upon infant mortality might be and probably is very great. That it does not in fact affect the birthrate is evident from statistics. In some countries in which sanitary conditions are worst the birthrate is highest; and vice versa. In some countries in which sanitary conditions are best the birthrate is lowest; and vice versa. There is no uniform rule.

There is, however, almost universally and invariably a

close relationship between the birthrate and the deathrate. The exceptions to it are such as can readily be traced to special circumstances which do not affect the general truth. There is also a similar relationship or correspondence between those rates and the average duration of life. That is to say:

Where the birthrate and deathrate are high, the duration of life is short. Where the birthrate and deathrate are low, the duration of life is long.

These rules obtain not merely in a few individual cases, which would prove nothing; but in the countries of the world taken in groups and as a whole, which is highly significant and suggestive. Thus of twenty-one leading countries outside of America, where vital statistics are too meagre and uncertain to serve our purpose, eleven have an average duration of life of more than fifty years, and ten of less than fifty years. The eleven, with the greater longevity, have an average birthrate of 24.9 and a deathrate of 14.08 to the thousand yearly. The ten, with the less longevity, have a birthrate of 36.2 and a deathrate of 22.5. The difference between these figures is so great that its significance cannot be ignored; and this significance is emphasized by the comparison of some individual cases. For example:

Russia has of all the highest birthrate and the highest deathrate, and the shortest duration of life.

Australia and New Zealand have almost the lowest birthrate and decidedly the lowest deathrate, and the longest duration of life.

Yet the natural increase—that is, the excess of birthrate over deathrate—is exactly the same in Russia as in Australia.

To cite the figures:

Russia has a birthrate of 45, a deathrate of 28.3, longevity of 27.8, and a natural increase of 16.7.

Australia has a birthrate of 27.5, a deathrate of 10.8, longevity of 56, and a natural increase of 16.7.

Russia's birthrate is more than 63 per cent and her deathrate more than 162 per cent higher than Australia's, yet the percentage of excess of births over deaths is precisely the same in both.

Another comparison to the same effect may be drawn between Austria-Hungary and Great Britain. Austria-Hungary has a birthrate of 31.7 to Great Britain's 24.4; a death-

rate of 21.2 to 14.2, and longevity of 38.3 to 53.8, and a natural increase of 10.5 to 10.2.

It is impossible to believe that these things "just happen so." They are surely the result of some ordered principle, concerning which four theories are advanced:

First—That because bad sanitary conditions cause a high deathrate, Nature incites fecundity in order to make good the loss and to prevent depopulation.

Second—That a high birthrate, which means excessive fecundity, overtakes physical vitality and exhausts material resources, and thus causes a high deathrate and short duration of life.

Third—That because good sanitary conditions make a low deathrate, Nature spontaneously induces a low birthrate, in order to avoid overpopulation, and thus conserves vitality and increases longevity.

Fourth—That because of a low birthrate, from whatever cause, nature increases vital forces and thus lowers the deathrate and increases longevity so as to prevent depopulation.

Whichever of these, or whatever combination of them, may afford the true explanation of the intensely interesting tendencies of vital statistics, the controlling law in the case seems to be inexorable. No country has ever more earnestly and persistently striven to increase its birthrate than has France; yet that rate has remained stationary. None has more devotedly and scientifically striven to maintain its rate than Germany; yet that rate has for some years been rapidly and irresistibly declining. The deathrate may to some extent, and to an increasing extent, be controlled, though not invariably. The birthrate is quite beyond control, except as it is lessened by the lessening of the deathrate. It is a grim reflection that if, by sanitation and therapeutics, we save men from dying, we at the same time prevent children from being born; and, conversely, that if we wish to increase the birthrate the surest way to do it is by neglecting sanitation and letting the deathrate increase!

Nevertheless, if the former of these processes be inevitable, and if to lower the deathrate means to lower the birthrate also, it will be wise and humane to continue our efforts to that end.